

# Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19

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Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are new vaccines that help stop the spread of COVID-19 disease. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is for people ages 16 and older. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is for people ages 18 and older. It is your decision whether to get the vaccine.

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## Before getting your vaccine

### General information

- **How it's made:** The vaccine uses a new type of technology that tells the body how to recognize the virus that causes COVID-19 and defend itself against it. The vaccine does not contain live virus. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.
- **Doses:** You will need two doses of vaccine to be protected against COVID-19. Both doses must be from the same product (Pfizer or Moderna).
- **Documentation:** You should get a card that shows the date you got your first vaccination. An appointment date can be written on the card, so you know when to come back for the second dose.
  - Keep the card in your wallet or purse and bring it with you when you come back for the second dose. If you have a cell phone, you can take a picture of the card in case you misplace it.
- **Timeline:** Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine doses are given 21 days (three weeks) apart. Moderna vaccine doses are given 28 days (one month) apart. Future vaccines for COVID-19 may have different wait times between doses or may only need one dose.
  - Since there are different waiting times between the first and second shot for Pfizer and Moderna, if family, friends, or coworkers get a different product than you, they may have a different waiting time.

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## Getting your vaccine

### What to expect

- **COVID-19 status:** If you are sick with COVID-19, or think you might have COVID-19, wait until you are better and have been cleared to come out of isolation before you get your COVID-19 vaccination.
- **Education:** Before you get vaccinated you should receive a fact sheet. If you have any questions about the vaccine, ask any of the staff at the clinic.

- **Agreement:** Some clinics may ask you to sign your name on a form that says that you received the fact sheet and you agree to receive the vaccine.
- **Screening:** You will be asked a few health questions to make sure it is okay for you to receive the vaccine.
  - Do not get a COVID-19 vaccination if you have had an allergic reaction to any of the vaccine's ingredients.
  - Do not get a second dose if you had a serious allergic reaction to the first dose. A serious reaction is one that made you go to the emergency room.
- **Safety:** Vaccination clinics will require you to wear a mask and stay at least 6 feet away from others, except the person giving the vaccination.

## Cost

The vaccine will be free to everyone, regardless of your immigration or insurance status. Some vaccination clinics may ask for medical insurance information so they can get reimbursed from the insurance company. You should not receive a bill. If you do not have insurance, you can still get vaccinated.

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## After getting your vaccine

### Common side effects

People may have side effects from the vaccine. Sometimes these side effects may stop you from doing your normal activities for a couple days.

Common side effects include:

- Pain where you received the vaccine
- Feeling tired
- Headache
- Achy muscles and joints
- Chills
- Fever
- Swelling under your arm pits

Ask your doctor about taking over-the-counter medicines for any pain or fever. These side effects should go away within one to two days. If you develop something of concern, call your doctor.

If your arm hurts where you got the shot, place a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area. Using your arm or exercising it also helps. Drink plenty of fluids if you have a fever.

Your doctor will tell you about v-safe, a smartphone app. It helps you track and report any side effects that you might have. V-safe will also remind you when it is time to get your second dose. Use the v-safe information sheet you got when you were vaccinated to install CDC's v-safe on your smartphone. Find more information at [V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html).

## Serious side effects

A small number of people may have a serious allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine. If this happens, it usually happens 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccination.

Serious side effects are rare, but you will be asked to wait for 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccination to make sure you feel alright.

**If you have a severe allergic reaction after you leave the vaccination clinic, call 911, or go to the nearest hospital.**

Signs of a severe reaction include:

- Trouble breathing
- Swelling of your face and throat
- Fast heartbeat
- Bad rash all over your body
- Feeling dizzy and weak

## Keep you and your loved ones safe

After the second vaccine dose, it takes about two weeks for your body to build up protection. It is not known yet how long COVID-19 vaccines may protect people who get them. It is not known yet if people who get the vaccine can still give COVID-19 to others if they get infected with COVID-19. Until we know more, you should continue to:

- **Wear a mask.**
- **Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone that does not live with you.**
- **Wash and sanitize your hands a lot.**
- **Stay home if you are sick.**



Minnesota Department of Health | [health.mn.gov](https://health.mn.gov) | 651-201-5000  
625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

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